

COMMISSION ACTION

NCPC File No. 5302



VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MEMORIAL
Massachusetts Avenue and New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.

Submitted by the National Park Service

October 6, 2005

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary site and building plans pursuant to the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. 8905)

Commission Action

Approves the preliminary site and building plans for the Victims of Communism Memorial, Massachusetts Avenue and New Jersey Avenue, NW, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 21.00(73.10) 41682.

Deborah B. Young
Secretary to the National Capital Planning Commission

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

D. Hamilton

NCPC File No. 5302



VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM MEMORIAL
Massachusetts Avenue and New Jersey Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C.

Submitted by the National Park Service

September 29, 2005

Abstract

The National Park Service (NPS), on behalf of the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation (VCMF), has submitted preliminary site and building plans for a memorial to the Victims of Communism. The VCMF is authorized under Section 905 of Public Law 103-199 to design, build, and maintain an international memorial in Washington, D.C., honoring the more than 100 million victims of communism.

Commission Action Requested by Applicant

Approval of preliminary site and building plans pursuant to the Commemorative Works Act (40 U.S.C. 8905)

Executive Director's Recommendation

The Commission:

Approves the preliminary site and building plans for the Victims of Communism Memorial, Massachusetts Avenue and New Jersey Avenue, NW, as shown on NCPC Map File No. 21.00(73.10) 41682.

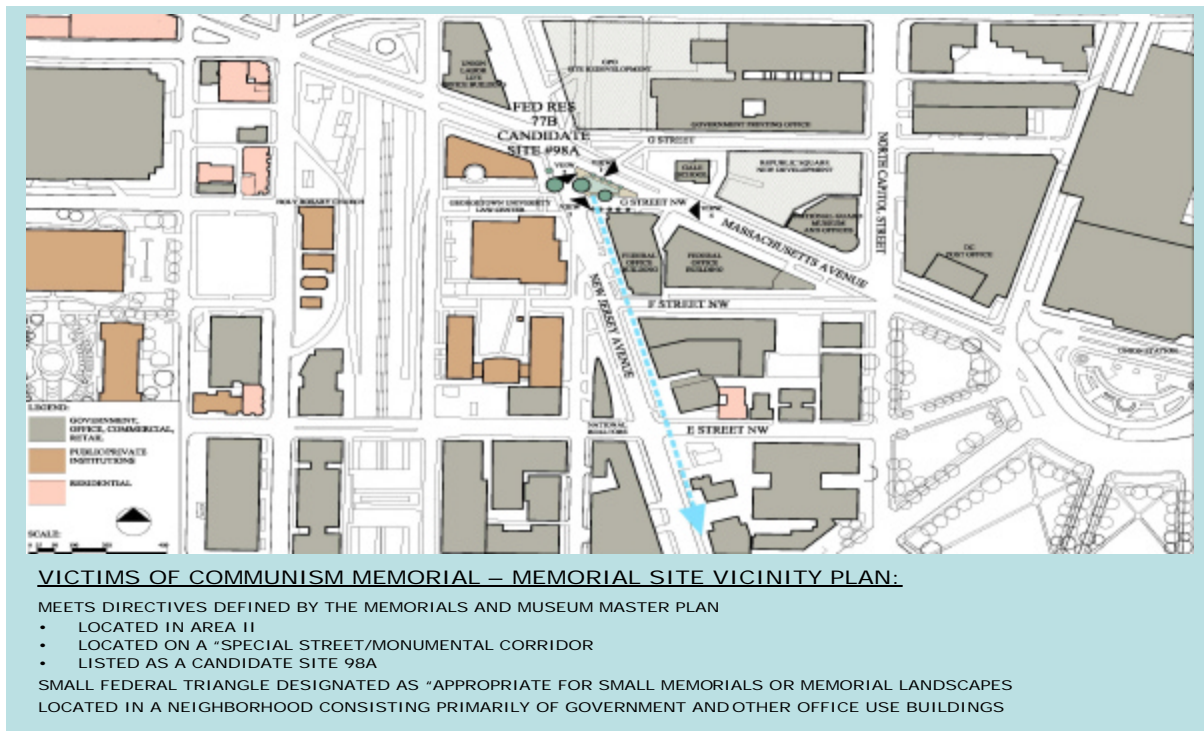
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BACKGROUND AND STAFF EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

Site

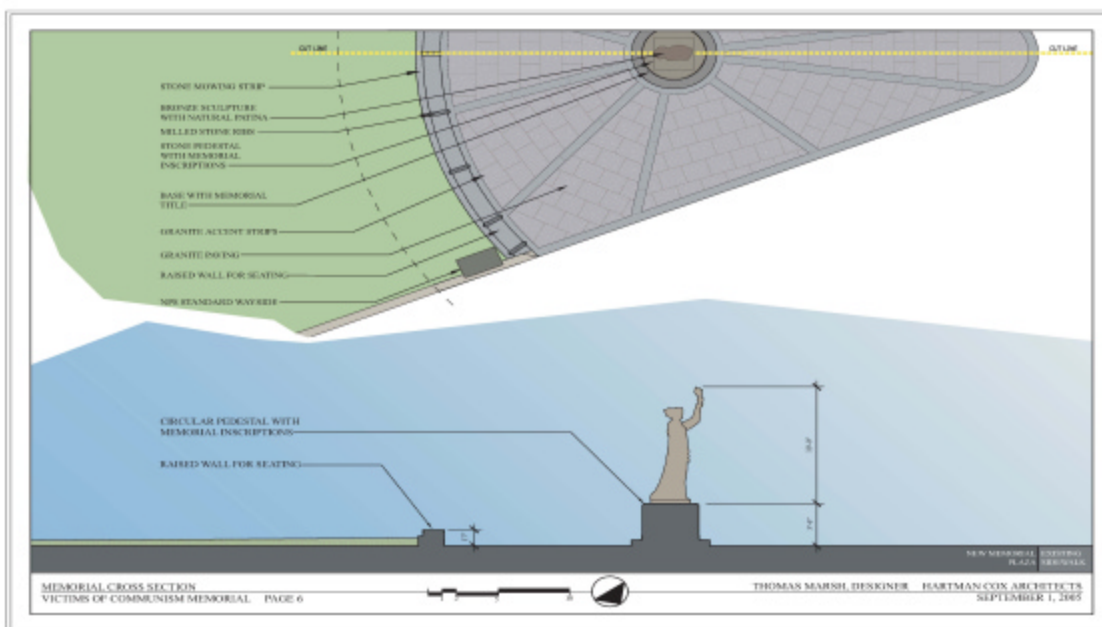
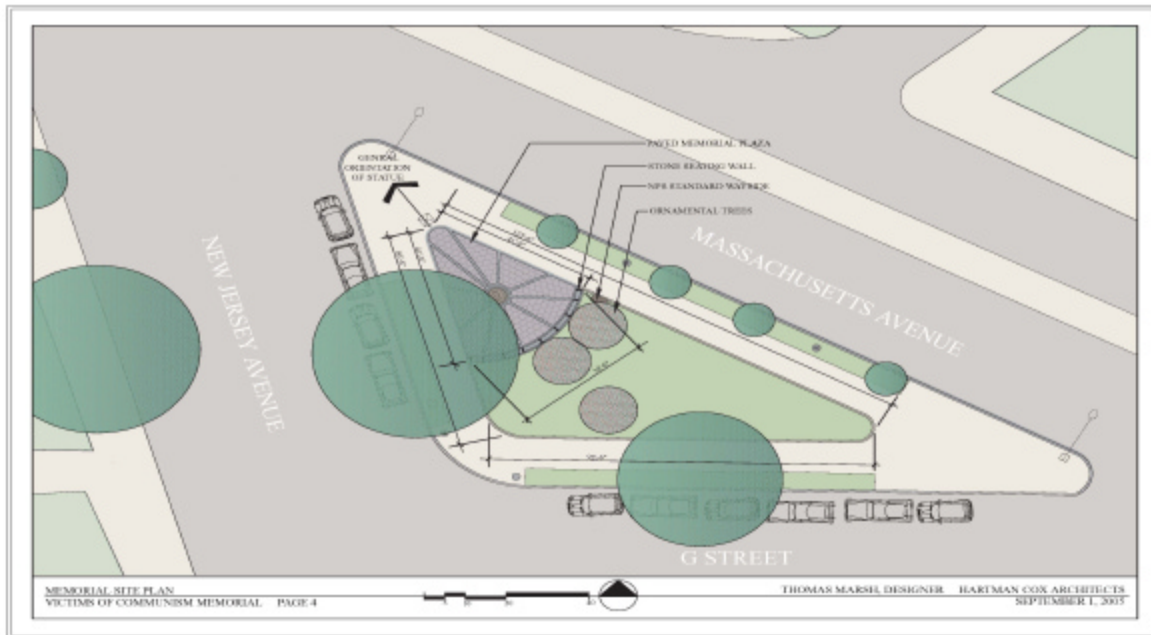
The site is U.S. Reservation 77B (Site 98A in the MMMP). This triangular site is located at the intersection of New Jersey and Massachusetts Avenues. It is bounded on the north by Massachusetts Avenue, on the south by G Street, on the east by the intersection of Massachusetts Avenue and G Street, and on the west by New Jersey Avenue. The Georgetown University School of Law is located immediately to the west, the Government Printing Office immediately to the northeast, and Federal Office buildings are to the south. Union Station is approximately two blocks southeast of the site and there is a direct view of the U.S. Capitol along New Jersey Avenue to the north. The site contains approximately 3,490 square feet, which does not include the surrounding adjacent sidewalks. It is covered with turf grass and is bounded by a raised concrete curb. There are no specimen plants existing within the reservation.



Memorial Design

The memorial will feature a paved plaza of approximately 900 square feet with a 10-foot-high figural sculpture atop a simple 3-foot-6-inch tall stone pedestal. The triangular plaza would be paved with two shades of warm gray granite pavers. The sculpture, the focus of the memorial, is a bronze female figure based upon the "Goddess of Democracy" statue erected in 1989 by the pro-democracy students in Tienanmen Square. The statue would be situated on the central axis of the two intersecting avenues and would be bounded at the rear by a low curved granite seating

wall. The 4 foot diameter sculpture pedestal would have a 9-inch wide sloped base with the name of the memorial in bronze letters. The front and rear face of the pedestal would feature dedications engraved into the stone. Three ornamental trees would be planted to the southwest of the memorial to provide a shady grove and frame the views of the sculpture. The remainder of the site would remain maintained green space. The existing street lights would provide the memorial lighting without the need for additional lighting.



PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTION

At its April 7, 2005 meeting, the Commission approved the site selection for the Victims of Communism Memorial.

PROJECT ANALYSIS

Staff recommends approval of the preliminary plans for the Victims of Communism Memorial:

- The site is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan in that it will be maintained and enhanced by the future memorial. It protects the L'Enfant designed green space and the location is easily accessible by metro.
- The site is also one of the recommended memorial sites in the Commission's Memorials and Museums Master Plan.
- The selected site has the full support of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission for the area.
- The overall area is an emerging office area and the enhancement of this space would add to the overall ambiance of this new office district.
- The site has excellent views of the U.S. Capitol, which should provide a thought-provoking experience on the virtues of freedom represented by the U.S. Capitol and the converse experience of communism. Similarly, it is in the immediate proximity of the Georgetown Law Center.
- The statue brings appropriate emphasis to the intersection of Massachusetts and New Jersey Avenues and provides a pedestrian amenity in this developing office area.
- The addition of the plaza and sculpture is consistent with similar memorials on other triangular park reservations throughout the city.

CONFORMANCE

Comprehensive Plan

The proposal is consistent with the *Comprehensive Plan for the National Capital*. The Parks and Open Space Element states that the federal government should:

- Restore, protect, and enhance historic designed landscape parks (squares, circles, and triangles) associated with the L'Enfant City (Policy #1, page 109).
- Maintain small urban parks primarily as historic parks and designed landscapes with fountains, monuments, memorials, tree cover, and other features of civic art (Policy #2, page 109).
- Site memorials in monumental and designed landscape parks in compliance with the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan* (Policy # 6, page 109).

Memorials and Museums Master Plan

The proposal is consistent with the *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*. The site is Site #98A (page 164) in the Plan. The MMMP states that:

- “An opportunity exist to incorporate small scale memorials within these triangular parks. With good visibility from Massachusetts Avenue and New Jersey Avenue, this site could accommodate a new memorial within the context of an emerging office district. Good views of the U.S. Capitol from these locations could provide an excellent opportunity for commemoration. The size and setting of the parcels lend themselves to understated commemorative elements at these locations.”

National Environmental Policy Act

NCPC staff had reviewed and determined a Categorical Exclusion qualification of the project in April 2005. Staff concluded the site characteristics of pedestrian access, access to public transportation, topography, property boundaries, and land area adhered to the environmental considerations of the Commission’s *Memorials and Museums Master Plan*. Considering the limited scale of the proposed memorial and the open, unstructured, and small size of the requested site location (0.08 acres under current ownership of the National Park Service), the staff found the proposal conformed to the Categorical Exclusion requirements of the Commission’s Environmental and Historic Preservation Procedures at Section 8, where all of the following conditions are met:

- The structure and proposed use are in compliance with local planning and zoning and applicable District of Columbia, state, or federal requirements;
- The proposed use will not substantially increase the number of motor vehicles at the facility;
- The site and the scale of construction are consistent with those of existing adjacent or nearby buildings; and
- There is no evidence of community controversy or other environmental issues.

The National Park Service analyzed the project to examine the potential impacts the proposed memorial may have on the socio-economic, cultural, aesthetic, and transportation resources of the project vicinity in compliance with Park Service environmental requirements. Since each resource discipline had its own unique characteristics, the Park Service review varied in the amount of detail necessary to evaluate the potential attributes. With the analysis accomplished, the Park Service concluded a Finding of No Significant Impact on September 1, 2005.

Historic Preservation Act

The NPS has determined that the selection and development of the site would have no adverse effect on the National Register qualities of the historic district nor does it adversely impact the arrangement of the streets and public spaces set forth by the L’Enfant Plan. Although the SHPO has concurred with this determination, the NPS advises that it will submit the final plans for the plaza and sculpture to the SHPO for its final concurrence.

CONSULTATION

Coordinating Committee

The Coordinating Committee reviewed the proposal on September 14, 2005. The Committee forwarded the proposal to the Commission with the statement that the project has been coordinated with all agencies represented, the participating agencies were: NCPC; the District of Columbia Office of Planning; the District Department of Transportation; the Department of Housing and Community Development; the Fire Department; the General Services Administration; the National Park Service; and the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

Commission of Fine Arts

The Commission of Fine Arts reviewed and approved the preliminary and final plans at its September 15, 2005 meeting.